

January 21, 2016

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History-Social Science Subject Matter Committee

Instructional Quality Commission
1430 N Street, Suite #5111

Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Comments on the Draft History-Social Science Framework Related to the FAIR Education Act

Dear Co-Chairs Honig and McTygue:

I am pleased to submit these comments on the latest draft of the History-Social Science Framework, made available for public comment on December 17, 2015. The Trevor Project is the leading national, nonprofit organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) young people through age 24. We work to save young lives through our accredited free and confidential lifeline, secure instant messaging services which provide live help and intervention, a social networking community for LGBTQ youth, in-school workshops, educational materials, online resources, and advocacy. Trevor is a leader and innovator in suicide prevention, especially as we focus on an important, at-risk population: LGBTQ youth.

LGBTQ youth are at a greatly higher risk of suicide than their non-LGBTQ counterparts. Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are four times more likely, and questioning youth are three times more likely, to attempt suicide as their straight peers.¹ Nearly half of young transgender people have seriously thought about taking their lives, and one quarter report having made a suicide attempt.² Societal discrimination, family and community rejection and poor media and other public representations of LGBTQ people can negatively impact the mental health of LGBTQ youth. We have tremendous gratitude for the state of

¹ CDC. (2011). *Sexual Identity, Sex of Sexual Contacts, and Health-Risk Behaviors Among Students in Grades 9-12: Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

² Grossman, A.H. & D'Augelli, A.R. (2007). *Transgender Youth and Life-Threatening Behaviors. Suicide and Life-Threatening Behaviors*.37(5), 527-37.

California and its legislators who appropriately recognized the need to have LGBTQ figures and history included in school curricula. Including this material provides LGBTQ youth with an opportunity to feel validated and may greatly contribute to improved self-esteem and a sense of belonging.

The Trevor Project commends the tremendous advances that have made in this most recent revision of the History-Social Science Framework. It is clear that efforts have been made to reflect and honor the legislative intent behind the FAIR Education Act by including key LGBT historical figures, a number of essential moments in the struggle for LGBT equality, and the evolution of LGBT communities and identities. We are pleased to see references to LGBT Americans and matters of LGBT equality in multiple grade levels throughout the elementary, middle, and high school grades. The revisions that have been made reflect the current scholarship on LGBT history and are historic and important contributions to the education of California's K-12 students.

However, the LGBT community has some additional edits we would also like to suggest to accomplish the following:

1. Ensuring students gain an intersectional understanding of LGBT identities, communities, and social movements with regard to gender and race over time. This includes discussions about third gender roles among some Native Californian or Early American tribes and the effects of colonization as well as a reference to the ways different social movements, such as the LGBT movement, have informed each other in the course description for Ethnic Studies in 9th grade.
2. Providing a concrete, age-appropriate example of a book about LGBT families in 2nd grade.
3. Using consistent language and modern terminology when referring to LGBT Americans, and removing any references to the term "homosexuals."

Therefore, below is a list of proposed edits, including chapter, page, and line number.

Chapter	Grade	Page	Our Suggested Line Edit
Chapter 5	2	p. 62	Line 49, add: " <i>In Our Mother's House</i> by Patricia Polacco"
Chapter 7	4	p. 90	Line 156, insert: "By exploring Native Californian cultures, students also learn that some tribes accepted third gender roles for females who assumed men's social roles and males who assumed women's social roles. Teachers can discuss how tribes such as the Klamath, Tolowa, Yuki, Gabrielino, and Chumash recognized males who preferred to dress and live as women and, in some cases, women who dressed and lived as men."

			Some Californian tribes granted such people important spiritual and social roles, sometimes including marriage.”
Chapter 7	4	p. 94	Lines 247-249, revise to: “Moreover, the imposition of forced labor, <u>Spanish cultural beliefs,</u> and highly structured living arrangements <u>negatively impacted scores of communities by degrading individuals, constraining families, circumscribing Native culture, and negatively impacted scores of communities and trying to eliminate diverse indigenous gender identities and practices.</u> ”
Chapter 7	4	p. 95	Line 257, revise and insert: “...fleeing from the padres. To exemplify Native Californian resistance, teachers and students could explore the well-documented 18th-century case of a Chumash male-to-female person who, after Santa Clara Mission friars ordered them to give up women's clothing and work, ran away from the Mission and resumed a third-gender role acceptable within their tribe. A few Indians openly revolted...”
Chapter 8	5	p. 126	Line 93, insert: “Students also learn how many American Indian tribes included those referred to by modern Native communities and scholars as two-spirits. These individuals were believed to manifest both masculine and feminine spirits and had distinct social roles that varied from tribe to tribe. These included healing, transmission of oral traditions and histories, fortune-telling, match-making, and the conferring of names.”
Chapter 12	8	p. 363-364	Lines 932-941, reorder and revise to: “The American Indian wars, the creation of the reservation system, the development of federal Indian boarding schools, and the re-allotment of Native lands profoundly altered Native American social systems related to governance, family diversity, and gender diversity. Reading Chief Joseph’s words of surrender to U.S. Army troops in 1877 helps students grasp the heroism and human tragedy that accompanied the conquest of this last frontier. Allotment entailed breaking up Native lands into privately held units (largely based on the Anglo-American model of the male-headed nuclear family)-, <u>displacing elements of female and two-spirit authority traditionally respected in many tribal societies.</u> Boarding schools <u>in the late 19th</u>

			and early 20 th centuries took Native children from their parents for years at a time, <u>imposing Christianity, U.S. gender binaries and social roles, and English-only education in order an attempt</u> to make them into <u>what school administrators viewed as proper U.S. citizens.</u> ”
Chapter 14	9	p. 416	Line 700, insert: “...and they can study how different social movements for people of color, women, and LGBT communities have mutually informed each other.”
Appendices	n/a	p. 900	Lines 1425-1429 should be revised to read: “Some western societies are still struggling with areas of civil rights that remain unresolved, such as marriage rights, <u>nondiscrimination protections</u> , and other issues of equality for their <u>lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender</u> citizens, but they can still provide leadership in applying global pressure against regimes that even in the twenty-first century mandate harsh penalties and sometimes even death against homosexuals <u>lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.</u> ”

Again, thank you for the extensive edits related to the roles and contributions of LGBT people that you have included in this latest draft of the History-Social Science Framework. We appreciate your consideration of these remaining suggestions, which will help to ensure implementation of the FAIR Education Act and reflect the diversity of California’s past as well as its present and future student and family population. These changes will make a huge difference in lives of LGBTQ youth, who will be able to see their identities validated in their curricula. Questions or comments may be directed to Amy Loudermilk, Associate Director of Government Affairs at amy.loudermilk@thetrevorproject.org or 202-380-1181.

Sincerely,



Abbe Land
Executive Director & CEO